



*Issues for Early Childhood Educators:
ALIGNING
Standards, Curriculum, and Assessments*

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Presentation Overview

Part I: Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

- Some Accomplishments
- Some Critical Problems
- Some Challenges

Part II: Addressing Five Both/And Challenges

- Background and Rationale
- Definitions
- Research Questions
- Limitations of the Study
- Method
- Results
- Implications and Recommendations





Part I

Taking Stock: What are the Issues?



Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Accomplishments

- During the 1960s-mid-1990s, the major foci were:
 - [Re]Defining early childhood
 - Increasing the *QUANTITY* of direct services for children and families
 - Convincing others of the importance of early childhood education
 - Research component
 - Outreach/Advocacy component





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Accomplishments

- [Re]Defining Early Childhood Education
 - Within the field there was common understanding that ECE included:
 - All children birth to age eight
 - The families and communities of the children
 - All domains of development
 - ❖ Physical and Motor
 - ❖ Social-Emotional
 - ❖ Language-Literacy
 - ❖ Cognition and General Knowledge
 - ❖ Approaches Toward Learning
 - Diverse settings
 - ❖ Child care centers
 - ❖ Pre-kindergartens
 - ❖ Head Start
 - ❖ Nursery schools
 - ❖ For and non-profit settings





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Accomplishments

- Increasing the *QUANTITY* of direct services to children:
 - 26 States in FY 2006 alone increased pre-k funding, rising from 2.4 billion in FY 2002 to 14.1 billion in FY 2006 (pre[k]now, 2005)
 - 46 % of three year olds and 69% of four year olds were enrolled in some form of early education in 1999, (NIEER, 2004)
 - 600,000 children participate in preschool special education program (USDOE, 2002)
 - 802,864 children were enrolled in Head Start (USHHS, 2003).





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Accomplishments

- Convincing Others of the Importance of Early Childhood Education
 - Research documents the importance of high quality ECE, unequivocally
 - Increasing number of researchers and research outlets (journals, websites, online journals)
 - Increasing number of non-ECE publications writing about the importance of ECE (NGA, CED, SCSL, ECS, BRT)





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Accomplishments

- Convincing Others of the Importance of Early Childhood Education
 - ECE is a part of the public speak...
 - Elected officials (e.g., governors, legislators, mayors)
 - Professional communities (e.g., medical, legal, social services, business)
 - Committees in Congress being renamed to incorporate ECE
 - Media being trained to understand and write about ECE





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?



***BUT,**
and it is a big but....*





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Critical Problems

Access: Children's access to ECE, while increasing dramatically, still lags behind most industrialized countries where preschool participation ranges from nearly 100% (England, Luxembourg, Netherlands) and 70-90% (Greece, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Italy)

Inequity: Children's access to pre-school is not evenly distributed, with 47% of children below the poverty line and 59% above the poverty line enrolled.

Quality: ECE is highly variegated.



Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Critical Problems



Salaries: ECE teachers earn poverty wages.

Turnover: ECE teachers leave the field at alarming rate.

State Inconsistencies: Certification and regulatory requirements vary dramatically by state.

Perceptions Persist:

- Cognitive effects of ECE are not sustained beyond grade three.
- Don't need much training to do ECE effectively.





Advertisement

GOOD CHOICE

"Our accountant continues to be amazed by the continued earnings and profitability of our business."

are not teachers, nor do they have degrees in education; and yet they own a preschool franchise. , involved in corporate sales management for a national organization for 14 years, and , a stay-at-home mom with a part time job as an aerobic instructor, are now the owners of , a preschool for children from six weeks to six years, in , Pennsylvania.

is a nationwide franchise of , headquartered in , Pennsylvania. With over 200 schools, it is the fastest growing preschool in the United States, and was recently recognized as the "#1 Childcare Franchise" for the fourth consecutive year by Entrepreneur magazine (January 2005).

Before making their decision to become a part of the franchise organization, was working for a company that was sold after years of private ownership, merged, and was sold again less than two years later. was looking to return to work outside of the home since their daughters were getting to the junior high level. She considered retail or food services, but realized that these industries would require nights and weekends and would take valuable time away from their family.

According to , "Since corporate stability seemed tentative for me, we decided to look to build wealth as a team, rather than simply getting a paycheck. Choosing afforded better hours, and given the need for quality childcare in our community, we felt this opportunity would offer financial growth as well."

With his corporate background, also recognized the importance of researching the level of support that would be provided to new owners,

in addition to the financial potential. As far as support, adds, "Training is mandatory for all owners, and an Opening Representative is assigned to each school as well. The Opener assists with the complex job of initial set-up, enrollment, and establishing the high standards of ."

In addition to opening support, offers on-going support in the form of curriculum, advertising, and professional development of teachers.

"As far as the financial reward - after only six months in operation our accountant remarked that revenue covering payroll and expenses was unheard of for a new business this size. Our accountant continues to be amazed by the continued earnings and profitability of our business," remarks .

The role of a owner was a big change in lifestyle for in particular. As the primary on-site operator, had to transition from working at home to a full workday. "My daughters participated in our business in the beginning by helping with decorating, volunteering at fundraisers, and performing dance routines for the children," says , "and as they've gotten older their help is now in the form of working with our after-school and summer programs."

"In February, we'll celebrate eight years in business. Today my hours are regular and flexibility is a part of my lifestyle," adds . "With an experienced staff and my love for all of the children and their families, I find my days both satisfying and rewarding."

To learn more about , please call 1-800-272-4901 or visit on-line at www.goddardschool.com.

A and B are not teachers, nor do they have degrees in education; and they own a preschool franchise. A, involved in corporate sales management for a national organization for 14 years, and B, a stay-at-home mom with a part time job as an aerobic instructor, are now the owners of School X, a preschool for children from six weeks to six years, in Pennsylvania.

School X is a nationwide franchise of X Systems, Inc., headquartered in Pennsylvania. With over 200 schools, it is the fastest growing preschool in the United States, and was recently recognized as the "#1 Childcare Franchise" for the fourth consecutive year by Entrepreneur magazine (January 2005).





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges

- *Both/And Challenge One*

- We need to focus on increasing access for all children and increasing quality
 - No new effort should be launched with significant quality provisions.
 - Work on quality rating systems, tiered reimbursement, and accreditation must be strongly supported.
 - A focus on professional development is ***ABSOLUTELY*** essential if we are to achieve quality and stave turnover.





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges

- *Both/And Challenge Two*
 - We need to focus on commandeering attention from those outside the field and pay attention to those inside the field.
 - For every business person at decision-making tables, there must be an equal number of early childhood folks.
 - Dollars invested in media campaigns and research should be matched by equal dollars invested in professional development and salary enhancements for those inside the field.





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges

- *Both/And Challenge Three*
 - We need to focus on increasing state funded preschools program *and* increasing federal interest and investment in ECE.
 - Advocacy efforts to increasing investments in early childhood education must take place at the state and at the federal levels.
 - Serious federal investment in some of our most valued ECE efforts (e.g., Head Start, CCDF, IDEA, TANF) is needed to, at least, maintain the gains of the past decade.





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges

- *Both/And Challenge Four*

- We need to focus on funding individual “programs” and on funding to build a cohesive, equitable ECE system.
 - Funding focused on individual programs only undermines ECE’s efforts to build a cohesive field and “make-sense” system.
 - Ultimately, the success of all ECE services depends on having a well-developed system that includes a focus on professional development, financing, community engagement, governance, and evaluation/data/accountability (e.g., the infrastructure).





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges

- *Both/And Challenge Five*
 - We need to consider the impact of professionalizing ECE and we need to underscore the principles that ECE holds dear.
 - As any field grows, it becomes more standardized and professionalized.
 - ECE is becoming more educationalized (e.g., movements toward teacher certification, standards, p-16)
 - Need to hold on to core principles and values (e.g., holistic education, meaningful family and community involvement, cultural pluralism)





Taking Stock: What are the Issues?

Some Challenges



- Focusing on One Key Issue
 - As I scan the five Both/And Challenges, I note they are broad.
 - I also note that there are many ways to address these issues.
 - I want to focus my remarks on one issue that, perhaps uniquely, addresses all five of the Both/And Challenges.



Alignment: A Critical Both/And Challenge

- What is alignment, according to Webster?
 - “To bring into proper coordination”
 - “To bring into agreement”
- What is alignment in education?
 - Talked about, most commonly, as the alignment of state assessments and standards (NCLB, Title I, USDOE 2002)
 - Focuses on the content and pedagogy of instruction





Alignment: A Critical Both/And Challenge

- What is alignment in ECE?
 1. *Horizontal alignment*- Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula ***within*** a given age level (e.g., Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten).
 2. *Vertical alignment*- Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula ***between*** given age levels (e.g., Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten).
 3. *Systems Alignment*- Synchronization among the standards established for teachers, for children, and for programs.



Alignment: A Critical Both/And Challenge

- **Quantity and Quality**
 - Address what we want (quality) for all children (quantity).
- **In and Out of Field Focus**
 - Clarifies for those in and outside the field (including parents) expectations for children and the degree to which we are set up to meet them.
- **State and Federal**
 - Creates a level playing field across all programs and funding streams, irrespective of state or federal impetus.
- **Program and System**
 - Impacts all programs and is part of a functioning system.
- **Professionalizing and Principles**
 - Creates the mechanism to take a public stand for holistic (vs a more limited literacy/numeracy) agenda.
 - Builds upon our principles of continuity and transition.



Part II

Alignment: Addressing Five Both/And Challenges



Overview of Part II

II.a. Background and Rationale

II.b. Definitions

II.c. Research Questions

II.d. Limitations of the Study

II.e. Method

II.f. Results

II.g. Implications and Recommendations





II.a. Background and Rationale

Why Alignment is Crucial:

- Without such alignment, it is impossible to gauge;
 - If that which we want young children to know and be able to do relates to what is being taught (the alignment of standards and curriculum)
 - If that which is being assessed relates to either to what children should know (the standards) or what is being taught (the curriculum).
- Without such an analysis of alignment, assessments remain inaccurate (not to mention costly) indicators of often irrelevant information.





II.a. Background and Rationale



1. Historically, standards, curriculum, and assessment have been developed and examined totally independent of one another;
 - Discussed in three very different bodies of literature, often by different scholars, with different degrees of attention (e.g., curriculum has received the lion's share of attention over the years);
2. Historically, we have studied transitions for decades in ECE, but not really focused on horizontal alignment
3. Today, the new focus on alignment, given the accountability movement



II.a. Background and Rationale

- Studying Transitions versus Alignment
 - *Transition* studies have focused on the structural mechanisms that ease children's movement from pre-school to school
 - Usually focused on that level only
 - Usually focused on structures and one-time activities (e.g., transferring records, holding kindergarten visitation and/or meetings for parents)
 - *Alignment* looks at the substance of children's 24/7 learning

Past Transition Studies: Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten



- Project Developmental Continuity (1974)
- Head Start Transition Project (1987)
- National Transition Study (1992)
- Chicago Longitudinal Study (1998)
- Abecedarian K-2 Transition (1999)



Studies Results

- Pre-K to K transitions are not very easy to implement.
- Transition efforts are not heavily present, despite numerous efforts.
- Great deal of emphasis in many efforts on the “activities” of transition, not the substance.
- Seems to be limited emphasis on what we refer to as alignment:
 - Pedagogical alignment of standards, curriculum, and assessment





II.b. Definitions



1. Alignment- Focuses on the context and pedagogy of instruction.



2. Transition and Continuity- Focus on the activities that support children and their families as they move from one setting to another.



II.b. Definitions

Two types of alignment are defined in this work



1. *Horizontal alignment-* Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula *within* a given age level (e.g., Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten).



2. *Vertical alignment-* Synchronization among standards, assessments, and curricula *between* given age levels (e.g., Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten).



II.c. Research Questions

- *Within pre-kindergarten* programs, is the content of standards, curricula, and assessments aligned (horizontal alignment)?
- *Within kindergarten* programs, is the content of standards, curricula, and assessments aligned (horizontal alignment)?
- *Between pre-kindergarten and kindergarten* programs, is the content of standards, curricula, and assessments aligned (vertical alignment)?
- What *factors* inhibit and/or enhance horizontal and vertical alignment in early childhood programs?
- What is the relationship between pre-kindergarten-to-kindergarten *transition/continuity* activities and the *alignment* of early learning standards, curriculum, and assessment?



II.d. Limitations of the Study

The study:

- Makes no claim at generalizability;
- Makes absolutely no comment on the nature of the implementation of the standards, curricula, or assessments; and
- Begins with a perspective that credits a comprehensive approach to early childhood development.



II.e. Method: Site Selection

	Site			
Demographic Information	Greenpoint, CT	Morning Side, CT	Westville, CT	Wood Hill, CT
Population in 2000	55,000	117,000	16,500	71,500
Number of families	14,000	28,240	4,200	17,108
Race and ethnicity (total population)				
% Caucasian	83	70	94	70
% African-American	8	15	1	11
% Asian	3	5	2	2
% of Caucasians and African-Americans self-classified as Hispanic	6	17	2	27
Median family income (2000) ^[1] ^[1] State median family income in 2000 was \$65,000.	\$59,000	\$69,337	\$46,646	\$41,000
% families w/children under age five	20	23	23	22
% families w/children under five and income below FPL	11	8	2	24
% children receiving TFA (2001)	4	3	5	15
% children eligible for free/reduced-price school meals	26	28	32	55
% sixth-graders who met/exceeded state goal on reading, writing, and math subtests of annual CT Mastery Test	41	35	36	17
% kindergartners in 2001 who had preschool experience in 2000	71	78	70	40



II.e. Method: Data Sources

- 23 Documents
- Informal dialogue
- US Census and 2003 KIDS COUNT



II.e. Method: 23 Instruments

23 Documents 4 Communities Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten	<i>Greenpoint</i> Pre-Kindergarten	<i>Greenpoint</i> Kindergarten	<i>Morning Side</i> Pre-Kindergarten	<i>Morning Side</i> Kindergarten	<i>Westville</i> Pre-Kindergarten	<i>Westville</i> Kindergarten	<i>Wood Hill</i> Pre-Kindergarten	<i>Wood Hill</i> Kindergarten
Standards Documents	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Curricula Documents	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assessment Documents	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

II.e. Method: Analytic Framework

NEGP Indicators

Physical & Motor	Social & Emotional	Approaches Toward Learning	Language & Communication	Cognition & General Knowledge
Growth Fitness Motor skills Functional performance	Regulation of emotions Feelings of others Self-concept Self-efficacy Social competence w/adults Relationships w/adults Social competence w/peers Relationships w/peers	Curiosity Initiative Reflection & interpretation Invention & imagination	Listening Speaking Social uses of language Vocabulary Questioning Creative uses of language Creative expression Non-verbal communication Phonemic awareness Literature awareness Comprehension Print awareness Book awareness Alphabet awareness Story sense Writing process	Physical knowledge Logico-mathematical knowledge Social-conventional knowledge Social knowledge

II.e. Method: Analysis Metric

Horizontal Alignment

I. Pre-Kindergarten

<i>Greenpoint</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Morning Side</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Westville</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Wood Hill</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments

II. Kindergarten

<i>Greenpoint</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Morning Side</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Westville</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments
<i>Wood Hill</i>	Standards	Curriculum	Assessments

II.e. Method: Analysis Metric

Vertical Alignment

Greenpoint

Standards	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Curriculum	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Assessments	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten

Morning Side

Standards	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Curriculum	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Assessments	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten

Westville

Standards	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Curriculum	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Assessments	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten

Wood Hill

Standards	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Curriculum	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten
Assessments	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten

II.f. Results

Pre-Kindergarten Horizontal Alignment

	<u>Standards</u>	<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Assessment</u>
<u>Greenpoint</u>	PAF	CC	PAF
<u>Morning Side</u>	HS	CC	CC
<u>Westville</u>	PAF	*****	*****
<u>Wood Hill</u>	PAF	CC	PAF

Note: ***** denotes lack of alignment
denotes alignment

CTBFR = CT Blueprint for Readiness; DRA = Developmental Reading Assessment; DD = District Developed; F&P = Fountas & Pinell; PAF = Pre-kindergarten Assessment Framework; HS = Head Start Child Outcomes Framework; CC = Creative Curriculum; NA = Not Applicable.

II.f. Results

Kindergarten Horizontal Alignment

Greenpoint

Standards

Marie Clay

Curriculum

F&P, D

Assessment

Marie Clay/Math

Morning Side

CTBFR

DD

DRA

Westville

DD

DD

DRA

Wood Hill

DD

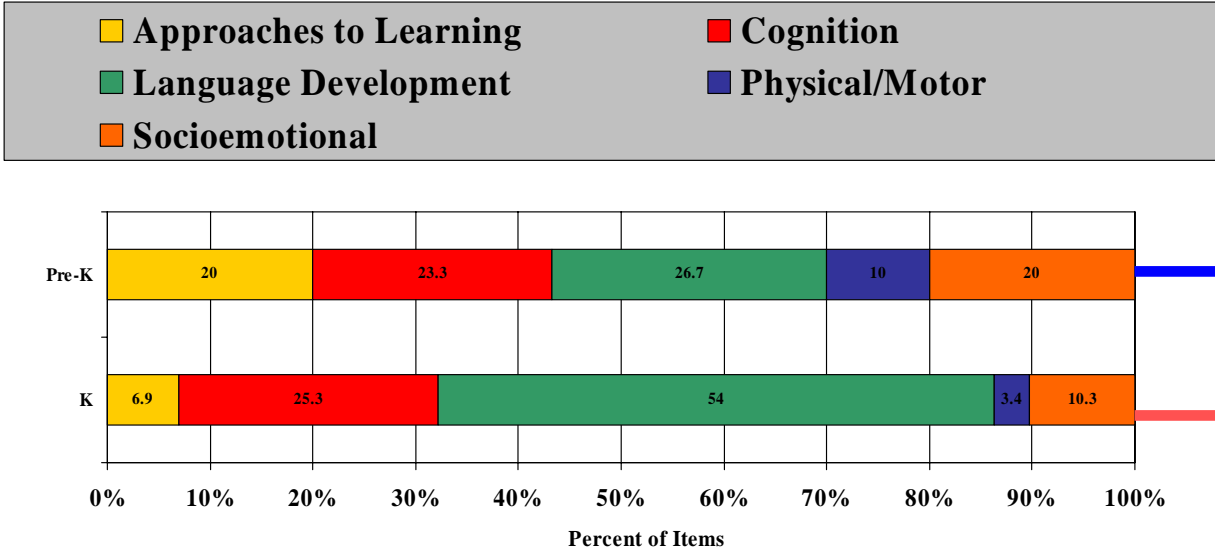
DD

NA

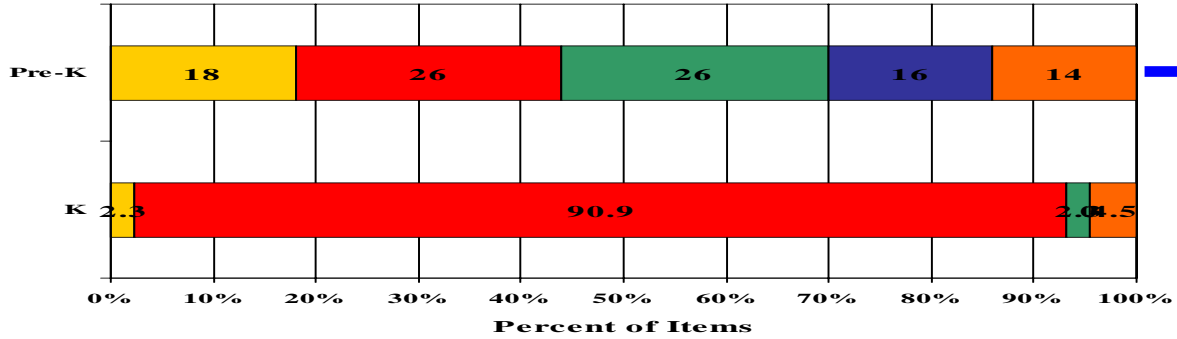
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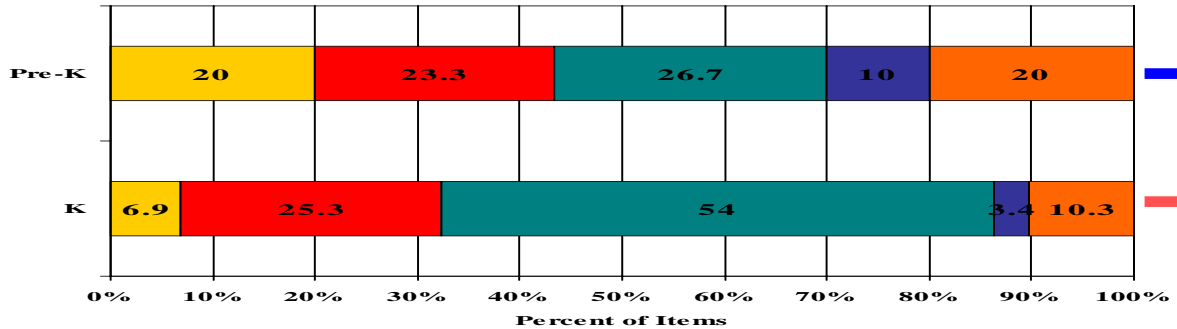
Standards



Curriculum

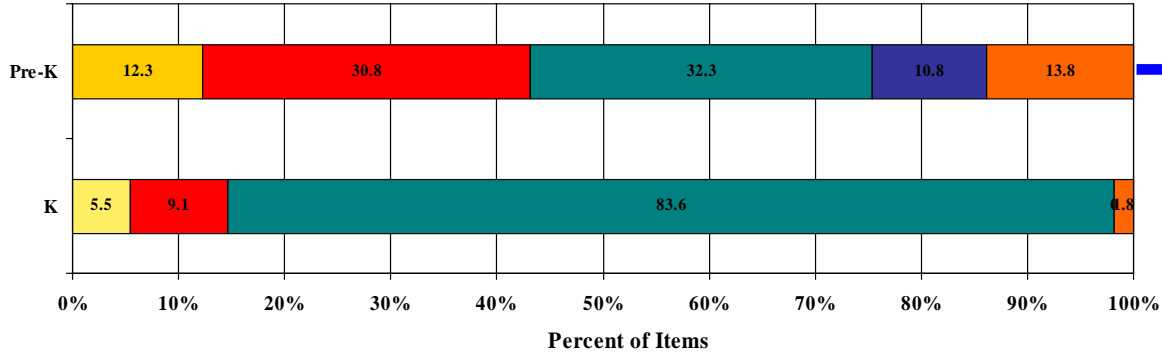


Assessment

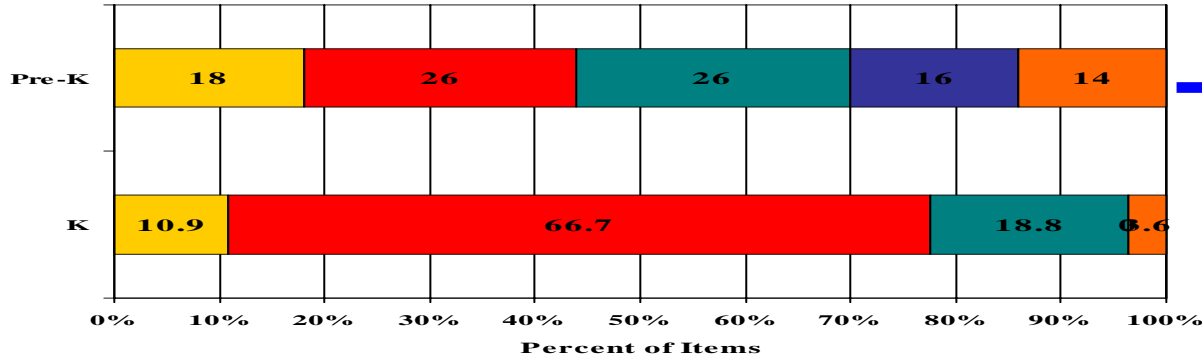


Morningside

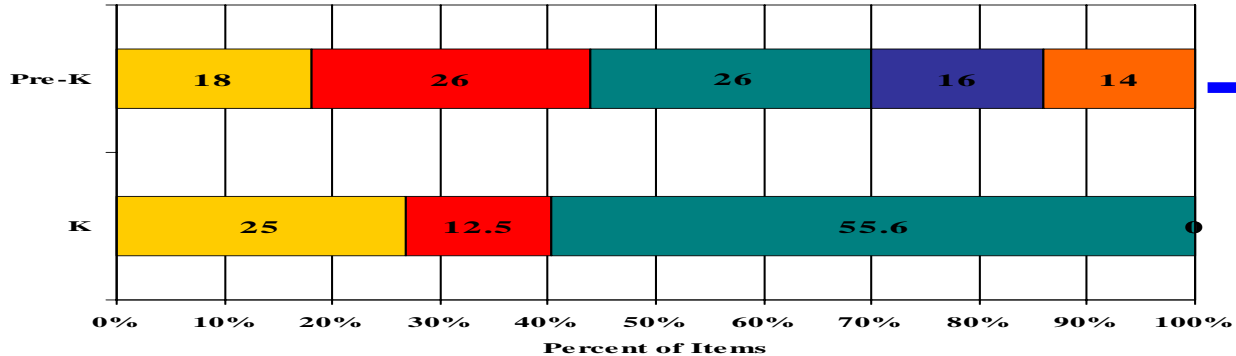
Standards



Curriculum



Assessment





II.f. Results

- More focus on the “whole child” (fostering cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth) in the pre-kindergarten documents than the kindergarten documents.
- Much more emphasis on language and cognitive development and virtually no emphasis on physical and motor development in the kindergarten documents; social and emotional development also received little attention.
- Greater horizontal alignment existed among the standards, curricula, and assessments within pre-kindergarten than kindergarten. In part, this seemed to be due to the fact that among the pre-kindergartens there was greater reliance on packaged curricula, which often were linked to assessments.





II.f. Results

- Some, though far less, horizontal alignment existed at the kindergarten level. This occurred in communities that developed their own standards and curriculum.
- There was virtually no vertical alignment of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs' standards, curricula, or assessments.
- There is great ambiguity surrounding the definitional and operational differences between alignment (of standards, curriculum, and assessment) and transition/continuity activities.



II.g. Implications/Recommendations

Two Important Next Steps

1. Make Alignment Important

2. Understand Alignment Better





II.g. Implications/Recommendations

1. Make Alignment Important

- Increase discourse on and study of the nature of standards, curriculum, and assessment are needed, given a commitment to the development of the whole child.
- Distinguish and clarify different kinds of alignment and the difference between alignment and transition.
- Provide technical assistance efforts should give more emphasis to vertical and horizontal alignment of standards, curriculum, and assessment.



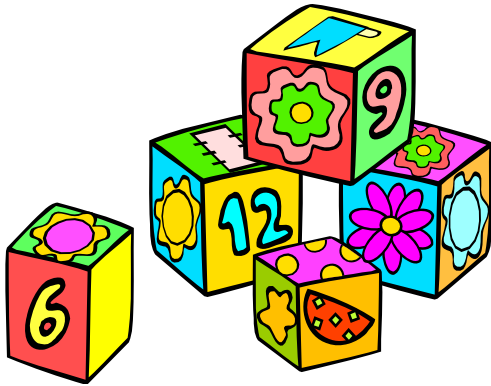


II.g. Implications/Recommendations

2. Understand Alignment Better

- Increase synchronicity the definition, parameters, and measurement of alignment.
- Develop measurement strategies to ensure consistent approaches are used for assessing alignment.
- Provide funding so that those interested can conduct alignment analyses.





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Success!!!

